What has been your most successful event that you were involved in planning and what made it successful?

- Wisconsin FFA Alumni Convention - raised $25,000.
  - Be organized; rely on predecessor help/advice, working with a site director is the key.

- Wedding
  - Managed the politics, the church sold one month before wedding – new invites, hotels, etc.
  - Don’t panic – adapt as needed. Luck is always a part of it.

- Community Development Society
  - In planning, if you can meet face to face, it really enhances committee rapport. You can’t do it all by teleconference. Involved simultaneous translation.

- Meat Products Auction
  - A wonderful planning team who worked well together

- Regents Visit
  - Pyle Center did all of the planning

- Washington D.C. trip
  - Lots of preplanning
  - Communication and Cooperation is the key to success, have a lot of teleconferences and meeting

- State Convention for legal secretaries
  - Workshop’s coordination

- Event Planning 101 Workshop
  - Was successful because of all the “experts” on the planning committee, variety of backgrounds – diversity is a great asset
  - Great presenters with a lot of knowledge and shared a lot of tips

- CSO Conference
  - Groundbreaking, collectively coordinated and supported by administration/organization and classified organization.

- Public Open House – consumers meeting farmers
  - Education and outreach event coordination.
  - Community volunteers doing organization
  - Get press/publicity for all farmers
  - Started in 1993 – still going on

- NCR Urban Extension Conference
  - Hired conference planning service to help with details
• New Orleans Cultural Immersion Experience
  o Having time to devote
  o Diverse perspectives on planning team.
  o Variety of approaches to accomplished objective
  o Identified outcomes first – as a participant, what you want

• Extension: Autism Information
  o Timely information
  o What people want to know

• 2009 WACEC Annual Meeting
  o More WACEC members on planning team and involved members more

• Multi-State Urban Conference
  o Used conference planning committee to make it successful
  o Adapt at pitfalls
  o Used speaker ready room
  o Kept them on a budget

• Virology Conference
  o The coordinator was very knowledgeable, very hands on.
  o Everyone knew what was expected of them
  o Great communication

• Program at AWTI
  o Used speaker ready room – liked it
  o Hotels that know state rates are helpful

• Outreach Scholarship 2007
  o Successful because of great planning team, especially the IT part

• Annual CNRED Faculty/Staff Conference and Symposium
  o Successful because of prior experience!
  o Holding it at the Monona Terrace – they have a “command central”

What has been you most challenging event that you were involved in planning? What did you learn?

• All technological “pieces”
  o All computers except for one failed.
  o Overhead projector caught on fire
  o Always preload all presentations on reliable computer

• Feedlot Tour with Ukrainian Farmers
  o Approved by them but when they came, they wanted to change program. Couldn’t get on schedule
• Our Meat Products Auction  
  o Learned to plan for problems that may occur

• Planning a conference for 1200 people with 10 male scientists  
  o Too many of the same group clogs things up  
  o Challenging committee

• Any event left open – no deadline set or allowing someone to miss a deadline just once – *Just say NO!*  

• Western District Director Interviews  
  o How to broadcast presentations with limited technology

• NCR Urban Extension Conference  
  o Economy – jobless  
  o H1N1 Virus struck just before conference

• CSO Conference  
  o Short time frame to plan

• WACEC Conference  
  o One district overseeing entire conference  
  o Would like to consider 2 district co-chairs, 2 DD’s and 2 PA’s.  
  o Work with conference planning  
    ▪ Ask better questions/make better requests to meet needs of registration table

• Statewide WIC Conference (WNEP partnered with them)  
  o Two very different cultures!  
  o Learned to “give and take”  
  o Always had to keep in mind what participant needs were  
    ▪ Meet needs at all times

• Statewide Conference  
  o Came onto planning team midstream in the process  
  o Call potential speakers without objectives

• International Conference  
  o Had to place calls in varied time zones  
  o Speaker did not show (communication breakdown  
  o Learned to confirm in detail at whatever it takes to communicate

• State WACEC Conference  
  o Hotel changed managers three times  
  o Poor communication

• Other conferences  
  o Clients can be very difficult – unrealistic expectations  
  o Managers with no backbone to stick to conference rules  
  o Good to have continuity – one central coordinator
• Last year I learned that it is best to not be eating during the keynote lunch address
  o Too many distractions, too loud
  o Schedule the lunch to be served directly after.

What event tested your creativity the most in regards to issues of location, room set up, meals, speakers, resources and references, etc.? What did you do?

• Organized Holly Jolly Light parade
  o Someone was to bring 700 cups – all profits went to purchasing cups the day of

• Local government conference
  o 70 registered, 150 showed up.
    ▪ Had to crunch in room, try to get food, etc.
  o Plan for extras on local officials – especially on rainy days when they can’t get in fields.

• Stick to your guns
  o Don’t give in to too much accommodation – it just makes everyone nuts

• Meat Products Auction
  o Due to the nature of the event, we have limits to work with that evolve each year.

• Children’s Events
  o The tornado with 500 kids in theatre

• Bad lunch
  o Disputed invoice, unauthorized charges

• Easier for people to do their own lodging
  o Just block off rooms

• Dealing with children is totally different from dealing with adults
  o Kids – we just assign rooms
  o Medical issues/meds/more high risk

• Urban Conference
  o Speaker ready room

• WACEC in North
  o Multiple lodging sites

• Mismatched room setups from what speaker requested

• Change from indoor to outdoor
  o Adapt to participant wishes

• Challenge of getting planning group together
• Plan something in unfamiliar location
  o Sometimes “sight unseen”
• Microphone, p.a. systems seem to never work
  o Try out in advance
• Urban Conference
  o Swine flu
    ▪ Planning committee made up non-handshake – had some fun, sense of humor
• A multi-state tour
  o Involved many financial aspects (bus companies, donations, payment of services, three different hotels for lodging and meals associated with conference activities) all in a short amount of time.
  o Had to hustle and called up the great people in our CE Budget Office

A Few More Tips to Remember!

• Know your site, visit a few times and the night before!
• Have a plan B for everything
• Create a successful planning team
• Do not plan speakers first
• Important to roll with the flow and have a sense of humor
• Need good files from time before
• Knowing needs of independent players
• Meet after your even with the planning committee and discuss what worked and what went wrong, take good notes for the next time!